



Sustainable service-learning strategies: Outcomes in physical therapy and rehabilitation science

Elizabeth Reicherter, Associate Professor, University of Maryland [ereicherter@som.umaryland.edu]

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Summary

Community service is explicit in the mission of the University of Maryland Baltimore. The Department of Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Science (PTRS) is thus guided by this principle. This presentation will describe examples and outcomes of the types of civic engagement utilized in PTRS, in order that they may be used by others as a resource for their sustainability efforts.

There are several mechanisms through which sustainable service has been established by PTRS, including the establishment of service-learning within the curriculum, specifically concerning cultural competence and professional practice. An *Underserved Populations* module is utilized for the cultural competency thread, wherein students perform health screenings with residents of a low-income, elderly facility.

The outcomes related to the *Underserved Populations* module are:

- a) A four-year ongoing relationship with the apartment community;
- b) An average of 25-year-old adult residents screened for physical health concerns (with 2-3/year requiring medical follow-up); and
- c) An average of 100 student-hours and 35 faculty/staff-hours utilized per year.

The outcomes related to the Professional Practice Opportunity are:

- a) 55 – 60 students per semester;
- b) 10 internal and 17 external community mentors;
- c) A wide variety of community settings including: research (n=10), educational (n=14), nonprofit (n=7), health administration (n=1), assistive technology (n=3), interdisciplinary health (n=3), and other (n=3); and
- d) An average student-hours of 1450 per semester.

The success of these service activities is due to several factors: they are required; there are clear learning objectives related to these activities; they are flexible in anticipation of changing community and curricular needs; and, finally, they are encouraged by the Scholarships of Teaching or Engagement (Underwood, Welsh, Gauvain, & Duffy, 2000), which provides a mechanism for faculty promotion through community service.

References

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